

Timeless truths hold sway today

By Col. Steven Corbett
Western Region Commander

FORT LEWIS, Wash. – Happy New Year! Over the holidays, my wife and I were browsing in an antique store in her hometown. I found a book entitled, *The Plattsburg Manual: A Handbook for Federal Training Camps*, dated 1917.



Corbett

The “Plattsburg Movement” was the immediate forerunner of ROTC in the years just prior to World War I. It was the brainchild of General Leonard Wood, the Army Chief of Staff, and proposed a program of Soldier and basic officer instruction in a series of summer camps. The principal camp was located at Plattsburg, New York, and the camps were generally known as “Plattsburg Camps.”

Although superseded by the establishment of the ROTC Program in 1916, the Plattsburg Movement provided a foundation of training and leadership for thousands of young men who would eventually see service during World War I.

This book was written by two Army lieutenants, O.O. Ellis and E. B. Garey, “*To*

tell the man who is going to Plattsburg, or to any Federal Training Camp, what he should know.” I’ve thumbed through this old book several times over the past several weeks. As with so many things in our Army, I am struck by how much has changed ... and how much remains the same.

Some of the things in the book seem comical today, such as the stern injunction to “*ensure you pack comfortable slippers,*” “*don’t get killed unless necessary,*” or the very detailed, seventeen-step command to halt a company and pitch tents.

Others resonate and are as important today as they were ninety years ago: “*Carry yourself at all times as though you were proud of yourself, your uniform, and your country,*” and “*Don’t trespass upon the province of a subordinate. He will handle his job, if you handle yours.*”

The longer I serve, and the more I learn of our history, I am continually struck by the never-changing, yet always evolving, aspects of our Army. This little book constantly reinforces pride in service, devotion to country, and the imperative to continually strive to know more in order to serve one’s subordinates. It is dated, yet timeless.

In my imagination, the original owner of this book fought in World War I. Perhaps he gave his life. If so, the most important professional knowledge included in this single, dog-eared book is this quote:

“*Never show fear. Never show fatigue. Know always, that your Soldiers are watching you and will follow your lead. Lead them well.*”

Nearly a century later, this remains the most important lesson for leaders.

One other thing that remains the same is the dedication and selflessness of young Americans. Ninety years from now, I’m sure that someone will stumble across our current manuals and be amazed at how much has changed ... and how much remains the same.

Many miles, visits help clarify mission to support programs

By Command Sgt. Major Victor Mercado
Western Region Command Sgt. Major

FORT LEWIS, Wash. – Happy New Year! I hope your holidays were as enjoyable as mine. Leaders, thank you for your outstanding continued reinforcement on safety during the holiday season. Let’s continue to keep the same motivation and discipline during 2007.

This year started with a bang. I had the opportunity to attend the Army-sponsored All-American Bowl in San Antonio, Texas. This was a world-class event. I was very impressed with all the athletes, their families, and the All-American Bowl committee. Once again, 12th Brigade was in the middle of it, assisting with the preparation and coordination for Cadet Command. Big Kudos to Col. James House, Sgt. Major Stephen Lamb and their staff for a job well done.

As I enter into my second year as your Command Sergeant Major, I can truly and honestly say that my place of duty is here. I am enjoying every minute of my tour of duty. The best part of my job is when I visit both Senior and Junior ROTC programs across the Region. I am going to log many more miles in the upcoming year, because I honestly believe that the only way to build and maintain a solid working relationship is by physically checking on training and personnel. This has always been my style of leadership.

Many of our programs are doing an awesome job despite the personnel and resources challenges. We are going to be facing many more challenges during this year. My challenge to you is to continue with the same positive attitude and motivation in everything you do.

Warrior Forge 2007 is just around the corner. Region staff is fully engaged with the planning. I am looking forward to seeing cadre and cadets in action. The goal of Col. Steven Corbett and I during Warrior Forge is to outperform last year’s safety record and to provide the best quality of training for our future lieutenants. In order to accomplish our goal we need all cadre and cadets attending Warrior Forge to bring their “A” game.

Take care, stay focused and train safe.



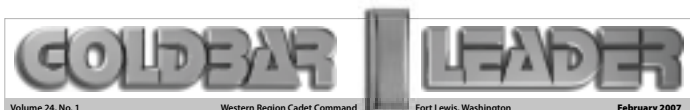
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Western Region, U.S Army Cadet Command

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